

The passage of the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* marks a historic milestone for our nation and an important step towards ensuring that health care is not simply a privilege for some, but a guaranteed right for all. Every single day, we see the benefits of health care reform in action in Florida's 23rd

Congressional district and across our nation. Having received hundreds of letters and calls from my constituents, it is clear that the

Affordable Care Act

is a step in the right direction, increasing access to affordable, quality health care for millions of individuals and families.

Unfortunately, there are those who have propagated much misinformation regarding the health care reform bill. To the contrary, the *Affordable Care Act* actually creates much-needed jobs and cuts the deficit. In fact, according to a preliminary estimate from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO), implementing H.R. 2 would increase the federal deficits by \$230 billion through 2021 and by billions more in the following decade. Furthermore, the *Affordable Care Act*

is fully paid for, nearly two-thirds as a result of reducing health care costs.

Since its enactment on March 23, 2010, the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* has been making a positive difference in the lives of millions of Americans, 32 million of which did not have health insurance prior. As you may know, the comprehensive health care reform law is being implemented in stages through 2014, giving health care providers time to transition to the new policies and patients further benefits and protections in the process. Many of these provisions have already been put into effect.

Because of the *Affordable Care Act*, young adults can now stay on their parents' plans until they turn 26 years old; four million small businesses are eligible for tax credits to help them provide insurance benefits to their workers; preventive services such as mammograms and colonoscopies are covered; it is illegal for insurance companies to rescind coverage when patients get sick; lifetime dollar limits have been eliminated; and denying the coverage of children and teenagers under 19 based on pre-existing conditions is prohibited.

In addition, since January 1, 2011, seniors who reach the coverage gap, which will be closed by 2020, are now receiving a 50 percent discount when buying Medicare Part D covered brand-name prescription drugs. The *Affordable Care Act* now also provides free preventive services for seniors on Medicare. And, insurance companies are now required to spend at least

80-85 percent of all premium dollars collected on health care services and health care quality improvement. If insurance companies do not meet these goals because their administrative costs or profits are too high, they must provide rebates to consumers.

The *Affordable Care Act* will continue to roll out new provisions until it is completely implemented in 2014, when all discrimination against pre-existing conditions will be prohibited and State Health Exchanges established to provide consumers with more affordable coverage options.

On January 19, 2011, I voted against the passage of H.R. 2, a bill to repeal the *Affordable Care Act* (please

see:

[ings Blasts Passage of Republicans' Health Care Repeal Bill](#)

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. While it is deeply troubling that House Republicans would gamble with the health of Americans for political gain, I am confident that this legislation will go no further in the Senate nor ultimately be signed into law by President Obama.

As a Member of Congress since 1993, I stand committed to continuing to work to make health care more affordable and accessible for all, especially middle class, working poor, and other vulnerable Americans. To learn more about the *Affordable Care Act* and how health care reform is benefitting you today, please visit

www.healthcare.gov

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